

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Status

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. Claim 10 has been allowed. Claims 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17 and 18 have been objected to. Claims 1-3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19 and 20 have been rejected. By this amendment, claims 4, 8, 11, 13 and 14 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9 and 15-19 are amended and new claims 21-23 are added. No new matter is presented.

Claim Objections

Claims 13-18 are objected to because of the alleged stated informalities. (See Office Action, page 2, ¶ 3.) Claims 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17 and 18 have been indicated as including allowable subject matter but have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. (See Office Action, page 6, ¶ 12.)

Applicant has canceled claims 4, 8, 13 and 14 rendering the objections to these claims moot.

Applicant has amended 15-18 to overcome the alleged informalities.

Applicant has amended claim 6 to depend from claim 1 and amended claim 9 to depend from new claim 21. Claims 7, 17 and 18 depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1, 2 or 3. Claims 1, 2, 3 and 21 are believed allowable for the reasons discussed below. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, claims 6, 7, 9, 17 and 18 are believed allowable.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 5, 7, 15 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly

claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Applicant does not agree with the characterization of these claims and the stated rejections. Nevertheless, Applicant has herein amended claims 5, 7, 15 and 16, respectfully requests reconsideration of these rejections and submits that the rejections to these claims be withdrawn as having been overcome or otherwise rendered moot.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) and 103

Claims 1, 2, 3, 12, 19 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by D'Ambrosio, U.S. Patent No. 6,459,760 ("D'Ambrosio"). Claims 5, 15 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over D'Ambrosio in view of Morita et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0154728 and claim 11 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomisaki et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,152,598 in view of Albert, U.S. Patent No. 4,057,745.

Applicant does not agree with the characterization of the pending claims and of the prior art in the stated rejections, and traverses these rejections.

Applicant has herein canceled claim 11 without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections to claim 11 be withdrawn as having been overcome or otherwise rendered moot.

Applicant has herein amended each of claims 1-3 to include the feature of claim 4, which the Examiner has indicated contains allowable subject matter. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that amended claims 1-3, and claims 5, 12, 15, 16, 19 and 20 depending therefrom, are believed allowable.

Applicant has not specifically addressed the rejections stated herein and reserves the right to address the substance of such rejections in the future as appropriate.

Dependent Claims

Applicant has not independently addressed the rejections of the dependent claims because Applicant submits that, as the independent claims from which the dependent claims depend are believed allowable for at least the reasons discussed *supra*, the dependent claims are believed allowable for at least similar reasons. Applicant, however, reserves the right to address such rejections should such response be necessary and appropriate.

New Claims

Applicant has added new claims 21-23, all of which include the feature of claim 8 that the Examiner has indicated contains allowable subject matter. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are believed allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the present invention as recited in the claims presented herein is believed patentably distinct over the art of record and Applicant respectfully requests that the respective rejections be withdrawn and the application be allowed as the application is believed to be hereby placed in condition for allowance.

If any outstanding issues remain, however, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

AUTHORIZATION

While no fees for an extension of time are believed necessary for this Amendment, should an extension of time be required for the timely submission of this paper, such extension is hereby petitioned, and the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-5378.

An early and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: March 15, 2006

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